323 were made. Several days later he reported that he had asked around about how pots were made, and some old-timers said that they braided sinew to the shape of pot they wished; heated white flint and pulverized it, and mixed with the blue clay from around the neighborhood of Hays. This mixture was about 6 per cent pulverized flint. The clay and pulverized rock were mixed in a mortar, pasted over the woven sinew, and baked. "It gets so hard you can't break it." Tom Bad Road, now (1948) about 70 years old told Mary Ereaux that once when he was a young boy he saw an old, old woman making a pot of "sand." The pot had dried hard, but some young fellows used it as a target for throwing stones and broke it to pieces.

554 The place of honor was at the back of the lodge, opposite the door. Here at night slept the "man of the house" and his senior
513 wife, if he were a polygynist, the other wives and children on either
545 side. Coming Daylight described the arrangement of her father's lodge as it was before she was sent to live with her grandmother. Her father and one wife slept at the rear, the bedding placed parallel to the door; she and her mother had their bedding to the left as one entered the lodge, and perpendicular in regard to the opening, sleeping with their heads to the rear and feet to the door; while her father's unmarried brothers were similarly placed as she and her mother, but on the opposite side of the lodge.

484 When on the move, the women were in charge of the children and impedimenta and usually traveled in a group considerably be-
492 hind the men. Horses or dogs were used to draw the travois, and sometimes younger children or the sick and disabled were carried thereon. Mae Main remarked that her memory of riding on a horse travois was not a very pleasant one as she was often annoyed by the horse's tail brushing over her. Horses had to be broken to the travois and a horse owned by a man would never be so used. The horse can draw a far heavier load than a dog, but seemingly the Gros Ventres at no time had so many horses that the dog could be dispensed with altogether and the dog travois survived until very recently. At such times that horses for one reason or another were scarce, the people would be forced to cache a great deal of their surplus and to cut their lodges in half so the load would not be too great for a dog to draw.

pressed this desire early in life and volunteered the following story of her experience.

"My first husband, Dressed in White, went out hunting and brought back a lot of buffalo meat. I had my robe spread out just inside the door and he threw all the meat on it. Being hungry, I sat down there and was just about to eat the raw liver when he said: 'Wait! Don't eat that.' When I asked why not, he countered with the query: 'Do you like children?' To which I replied: 'You know I love children. I go wherever there is a baby—I love to have them on my lap.' So he said: 'Well, it is your fault that this is going to happen.' He took the oval piece of meat from the upper front quarter and roasted it in the coals. He then threw it to me in a careless way, instead of passing it to me as usual, and said: 'Here, you can have that for your son. You eat this plain—don't eat any tallow with it.' although they usually ate tallow with such lean meat. I said in disgust: 'E:ka:kya! I have always liked children,' and flung the meat out of the door. He said: 'Now that you have done this, you are going to have children from now on.' So, as he predicted, not long after that I became pregnant with my firstborn who was a boy. Unfortunately this boy died and I often wondered if it happened because I threw the meat too violently on that occasion when my husband had offered me the opportunity to choose whether or not I wished to bear children." Incidentally she remarked many times that she is happy she chose as she did,—otherwise now she would be all alone and her children have been so good to her.

The telling of the above incident brought to Coming Daylight's mind another, which confirms her belief in the relation between "medicine" and conception. "Crow Bull, my mother's brother, had four wives. His first wife did not have any children. Then he married an Assiniboine woman and still later took a third wife. Neither of the latter had children either until one time Crow Bull got mad. His third wife wanted to leave him for another man, but her relatives sent her back to Crow Bull. He, however, slept across from her bed and did not have intercourse with her. Shortly after this the Assiniboine woman did something to displease him and so he made up his mind: 'These two wives of mine are going to have children and settle down!' He had an old-fash-

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

CHAPTER IX

MARRIAGE

Polygyny and the Child-bride

The institution of the child-bride, combined with polygyny, was characteristic of Gros Ventre marriage up to about 1880. How far back it was practiced is difficult to say. Our informants who themselves were married off as children of ten or eleven to their first husbands about the year 1865, took the custom for granted and so far as they knew "it had always been that way."[1]

All girls were given in marriage before puberty, and usually as wives to older men with independent households. Because of the disparity in age between husband and child-bride, many of these girls were widowed early and remarriage was quickly arranged for them, even if the widow were not claimed by her husband's brother. Moreover, divorce or separation initiated by the husband was relatively easy and frequent. Consequently the majority of Gros Ventre women knew at least three or four different husbands, and often in fairly rapid succession. Upon successive remarriages the wife's age came to approximate more closely that of her husband.

Young men were not eligible for marriage until about twenty. By that time a young man would have attained proficiency in hunting and have taken the first steps in ceremonial life, being a member of one or other of the two adult men's societies, either the Wolf-men or the Stars. In addition he should have war-deeds to his credit and some property of his own, especially horses stolen from the enemy, in order to qualify as husband. In view of the fact, however, that very young girls were given more often to older already-married men, most young men marrying for the first time had as wife "an older experienced woman." Actually

[1] It was believed that a girl could not menstruate until after she had experienced sexual intercourse. If, therefore, a girl had her first menses before she had been given in marriage, her family would be disgraced.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

this meant that a young man's first wife was not necessarily "older" in years than he, but that she was "experienced" in marriage, having been either widowed or divorced, perhaps several times.

Only as an exception was a bachelor married to a child-bride. One case of the kind which was recalled concerned a young man who was a "beloved-child" and consequently highly favored by his parents. He however refused to "settle down" when his parents suggested various marriage partners to him, and acceded to their request only when they obtained for him the hand of a young girl who had not previously been married.

Young men just starting their careers were urged to seek as wives among the "older" women, those who were known as "good workers" and who had acquired some property of their own. A wife of this kind could help him become established, and "if he amounted to anything" it would not be long before he could take a second wife, perhaps a younger sister of his first one. Then, as he became more prominent, he would acquire one or two additional wives.[2] To this type of man child-brides usually were given. It was said that an outstanding man had three or four wives at the same time, but conditions were such that he would have had a dozen different ones in the course of his career.

A man was considered fortunate if he obtained as wife the oldest of several sisters as the chances were great that these others might be offered to him. "If a man married the oldest girl in a family, and her folks liked him and saw that he was a good provider and that he was trying to live right, they would give him the two or three others as they came of age." Many instances were given wherein several sisters were married to the same man. On the other hand it was said that, if a man, who was already married to one or more sisters, asked for another, he might be refused and that "there was nothing he could do about it."

Since the levirate was permitted, it was possible that a man could claim the wife or wives of his deceased brother. This was seemingly carried out infrequently, however, since only two instances could be recalled.[3] Of these two, one involved Coming

[2] For a discussion of the economic basis of polygyny, see pp. 73–74.

[3] "The brother of a dead man sometimes married his widow, but this was not always the case." Kroeber, 1908, p. 180.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

Daylight and her sister, who were married, for a short while after their first husband died, to his classificatory brother. The other concerned an outstanding woman, Woman Chief, who was said to have been so highly valued by her husband's people that "she was kept in his family by marrying her to three brothers [successively]."

Regulations

Marriage was prohibited for those related by blood, no matter how remote the tie. If, however, a couple were in "good faith," so to speak, and it was discovered later on that they were distant kin, it was not considered necessary for them to separate on that account.[4] Affinal relatives were likewise barred as possible marriage partners, except those who were classified as in-laws of the same generation.[5] In other words, the levirate and sororate were permitted, so that any who addressed each other as brother-in-law and sister-in-law respectively were possible mates, but relatives-by-marriage in any other category were prohibited from contracting marriage. The far-reaching effects of this latter regulation can be seen from the following case. "Not so many years ago, a Gros Ventre woman was the subject of a great deal of gossip because she married late in life a man who, many years previously, had for a time been married to a widow of her maternal uncle. People didn't like it and thought she shouldn't have married that man, even though times had changed and the whites wouldn't count them as being related to each other at all."

Arrangements

As a rule, marriage arrangements were made between the husband-to-be and one or other of the bride's male kinsmen,—father, uncle or brother. Either side could take the initiative, but the bride herself was not consulted. Coming Daylight summed up the prevailing attitude in this way: "When I was young, a girl's life was not her own. When a girl was about seven she was sent away from her home to a grandmother or widowed aunt to be trained to do a woman's work.

[4] See also the discussion of band affiliation and exogamy, pp. 29–31.

[5] For kinship classification, see pp. 124–25.

2? Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

grandmother while her uncle's wives were making a lodge which they gave to her; then they went back and her new lodge was the sixth in a row, the five others being those of her husband's relatives who habitually camped together. When this husband died, she was claimed by a classificatory brother of her husband's and remained with the same people. This marriage did not last very long and, when her uncle arranged another marriage, again she lived near the man's relatives rather than her own. Since this too was of short duration, she remarried another time and lived in the same lodge as her husband's mother and unmarried brothers, until, at the time the Gros Ventre settled down (after 1883), her husband got a farm of his own and his mother went to live with one of her daughters.

Relations between Co-Wives

Subsidiary wives were known as "helpers" to the senior wife and co-wives addressed each other as "rival," unless they were related to each other and employed the ordinary form of address as "sister."[8] The senior wife distributed the household tasks and the "helpers" were allotted the heavier work, which usually included the procuring of fuel and water. Nevertheless all women were expected to be industrious and the senior wife as a rule enjoyed no more leisure or freedom than the others. In explaining the situation, Cora referred to her mother's experience. "My mother was always that kind of 'helper' but she didn't seem to mind it. After all, there were so many women who were 'helpers' and, as long as they got their work done, it didn't seem to matter who was 'boss' and who was 'helper.' They used to say in fact that some women preferred to be 'helpers' because while doing their jobs like going after water, they would have a chance to get away by themselves for a while—their husbands couldn't keep such close watch over them."

One of the advantages of living in a polygynous household was

[8] The Gros Ventre word for subsidiary wives, *atsd'anhiniya*, although at present sometimes translated as "slaves" as well as "helpers," is etymologically the same as the term applied to younger men who were appointed on ceremonial occasions to act as "waiters" for the principal performers. The term *inf'isag*, "rival," was used between co-wives who were not kin.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

595 said to have been that the wife who was pregnant, whether senior or subsidiary, could be well cared for and was relieved of the heavier domestic tasks until a considerable time after the child was born. Furthermore, the children of all wives were considered [858] equal in status. "As long as a man claimed the children as his own, he treated them all the same way, whether they were the children of older or younger wives." That differential treatment was sometimes accorded children by their father can be seen from the following case, although it is doubtful whether the father distinguished between his daughters simply on account of the relative position of their mothers. Singer, however, implied that it was so in giving the account of her experience: "When I was married as a younger wife to a certain man, he certainly made a difference between my child and that of his older wife. Both of us had girls, but one time, for instance, when I was out getting wood, they threw my little girl right out of the lodge. A neighbor took her in and when I returned this neighbor said to me: 'I notice they don't seem to care much for this little girl.' So after that I would have to take her with me, carrying a heavy pack on my back and dragging my little one along by the arm. Although my husband never let me use a horse, he would put the child of his other wife on the saddle when he was riding, and often he would hold her in his arms when he was around the camp. One of the worst things I had to endure was that when my husband would return from trading at Fort Benton with goodies like candy and fruit, my little girl was never given any and had to stand by and watch the other child eating. Finally it got so bad that my father took his grandchild and raised her. But I must say that this husband of mine was a really mean man."

587 The general feeling prevailed that sisters got along together more peaceably as co-wives than did "rivals." In any case the 595 sororate was preferred and it was said that parents were better satisfied to send a child-bride into the household of her sister. This attitude was exemplified by Singer's father in the following account which she gave: "I had been given to my sister's husband when I was just a child. It wasn't a real marriage because I didn't stay long enough. I was sent home by him because he thought I would rather play than work, and my sister took up for

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

me and he didn't send for me to come back. Not long after that though, my sister died, and her husband's other two wives came after me. I was playing out on the ice when they came and told me they were going to take me back with them. Ignorant as I was, I said I would go, and that I would have to tell my father first. But my father said: 'No. You shouldn't go with them. Those two women are not related to you and they might be mean to you. If your sister were still living, I would see to it that you went back to that man.' So those women said nothing more and I never heard from them or their husband again."

It was also thought that if the older wife were the sister of a child-bride she might be more willing to "protect" her. The husband of so young a wife was supposed to "wait a while" before claiming the marital right, and some men actually did so. Dressed-in-White for instance deferred the consummation of his marriage for over two years after Coming Daylight had been given to him at about the age of ten. Other men were not so considerate, however, and if an older wife tried to delay the procedure it was interpreted as being done not out of jealousy but through fear of consequences to so young a child. The husband alone determined the use of the marital right and such interference as another wife could offer would be only indirect. This is shown in the following account which concerns a woman well-known to both Singer and Coming Daylight. "One night soon after her little sister had been sent to their husband, this woman overheard him say to the girl: 'Make your bed wider, I am going to sleep with you.' Her own bedding was on the opposite side of the fire from that of her sister and she decided to try to discourage her husband from this undertaking. As she had expected, the husband that night covered up the fire so the lodge would be dark. On the sly, however, she was able to poke the fire so it flared out brightly. He got up and dimmed it once more, but again she made it flare. This was repeated several times and once she heard him say angrily; 'Oh, this is such good wood, it burns too well—I wish I could kill it!" Finally to her dismay she heard him whisper to the girl: 'I will take you outside because I can't seem to make it dark in here. You must not scream or cry out though because

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

587 587 595

your sister is alseep.' She was unhappy that her efforts had failed, but of course she didn't dare do anything more."

In confirmation of the theory that sisters lived in harmony as co-wives, Coming Daylight said that she and her younger sister had gotten along well together, but the two had some difficulties with a "rival" in one of their marriages. She added that whether wives were kin or not was less important than "the kind of women they were who lived in the same lodge." Cora gave an interesting illustration of the personality factor involved. Her mother once was married to the same husband of both her older and younger sisters. The youngest of the trio knew that their father had rejected her when she was born. The order to abandon the infant had been carried out, and she was found and adopted by a friend of her father's who raised her as his own. Cora said: "My mother and her older sister got along just fine. But the younger one never hit it off with these other two. It seemed like she was always jealous of them and took every chance she could find to get them in bad with their husband. She was kind of 'tricky.' Although as usual they lived in the same lodge, with their husband, she had her meals separately from the other two, she fetched water only for her own use, and on nice days when they sat outside the lodge she put up her shelter apart from theirs. Things were so bad between her and the other two, even after this common marriage was finished and they had separate husbands, that I grew up without realizing that she was my mother's sister. So that is the reason I feel no responsibility for her now."

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Sometimes a senior wife of bad disposition made it very hard for a very young "rival," especially if she were in her husband's favor and the subsidiary wife were not. Singer told of one of her experiences with such a "rival." "I was much younger than this woman and she treated me abominably and sometimes she even beat me. One time my father found me crying after this woman had hit me, and he told me: 'You are getting to be a big girl now. You ought not to let her treat you like that. You should fight for yourself.' So the next time this woman pulled my hair, I grabbed her just as though I had turned into a bear, and held her to the ground and almost killed her. Those outside the lodge heard the commotion and someone yelled: 'Tie them together! Tie them

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

together!' so I jumped up and ran as hard as I could. Finally after wandering around a long time, not caring whether I lived or died, a man on horseback caught up with me. Telling me how dangerous it was to be out alone on account of possible capture by the enemy, he persuaded me to go back. Nobody said anything to me directly, but one of my husband's relatives did take up for me by saying insultingly to my husband: 'You would have such a one for a boss wife. She is ugly, and has a shaggy head, and she doesn't even know how to do a woman's work properly—blood runs out of the meat she prepares!' The older wife left me alone after that incident." 595

Nevertheless Singer admitted that in spite of her unhappy life with co-wives in two or three of her marriages, when she was married to Iron Bucket, she and her "rival" cooperated very nicely and were never jealous of each other or quarrelsome. All the women too agreed that, while the husband did not approve of hair-pulling and "jaw-fights" among his wives, and could resort to stern measures to prevent it, there were many polygynous households where peace and harmony reigned.

Authority of the Husband

The husband was expected to assume complete responsibility for his wife and had the right to enforce obedience. It was perhaps inevitable that some men used their authority in an arbitrary manner. The following was one among many examples offered in proof of this point. "There was a man who was known to be very stingy. On one occasion his wife cooked more meat than he thought she should have prepared. He was very angry with her and, in order to punish her, he made a big pile of the meat and forced her to eat every scrap of it. It made her very sick and she had to vomit a couple of times before she could get it all down. But she preferred to be sick rather than to get a beating." 593 562

It was said that wife-beating was very common and that in many cases it was unjustified. Singer gave part of her own experience as a sample. "My husband wouldn't allow me to go anywhere away from the lodge except to do the necessary jobs of getting wood and water. The whole time I was married to him I attended only one celebration. That time he more or less had to let

'It is a good thing you cleaned my nose, because for that I am giving you that woman over there.'" 684 558

A husband who had harbored an unfaithful wife was likewise within his rights in "throwing her away." This was accomplished by his going to a public gathering and simply throwing down a stick to indicate that he was through with her. Whoever wished might pick up the stick and claim her as his wife without giving any compensation. 684 586

It was said, too, that if a man was "big enough" to allow his wife to go unpunished for adultery he usually would not refuse to eventually let her go to some lesser man who demeaned himself by asking for her. Thick related details of several transactions of this kind which occurred when he was a young boy. One of these was as follows:

"There was a man who had several wives, perhaps four. One day another man came to his lodge. He invited him in and said: 'This is the first time you ever came into my lodge, my friend. You must have a reason to come now, after all this time.' Then he said to his wife: 'Woman, get up and cook for my friend.' So the visitor spoke up: 'Well, my friend, the purpose of my coming here is to ask you for that Arapaho woman. I am not married now, I haven't a wife at present and I need a wife.' The host replied: 'All right, my friend, she is yours. After you eat, you could take her home.' When he had finished eating, the visitor said: 'Well, my friend, I have to go a little further. I want that boy of hers too.' The host answered: 'I hate to let my children go, but since he is so small you could take him, but don't ask for any of the others.' So the visitor, happy that he had gotten this woman without much talk and a boy as well, said: 'Well, my friend, since you are so good to me and give me your boy, I will give you a horse, my last horse.' It turned out that he was as good to this boy, whom he had attained in this way, as he would have been to his own son." It should be noted that the horse was given voluntarily and because of the child rather than in compensation for the wife.

It was the opinion of those women who had lived under this system, wherein the authority of the husband was so great, that all in all it worked well. They admitted that an occasional woman 595 562

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

595 562 suffered injustice, but they insisted that the disciplinary power of the husband "made good wives of many women." In spite of the fact that many cases were given in illustration of harsh treatment, not a few were mentioned in which husband and wife lived happily together in an atmosphere of mutual esteem and deep affection. Coming Daylight herself, for instance, experienced what could be considered an ideal marriage with her first husband, Dressed in White.

Extra-marital Affairs

837 Girls were instructed before marriage to expect and condone infidelity on the part of the husband. An ambivalent attitude prevailed in that a man's reputation was said to have suffered if he were known as one who was "always fooling around with other men's wives"; yet brave young men were expected to make as many conquests as possible.

There were few women who escaped their husband's suspicion at one time or another. The reasons why the suspicion was often justified were given by Singer to have been the following. "Too often young girls were given in marriage to old men for whom they did not care and to whom they never got attached; so when younger men more to their liking came along, lots of these girls gave in to them and took chances of getting caught by their husbands. But even if a woman liked her husband and he was real good to her, when she saw that he was running around with other women, she might be jealous and want to 'make her life bad' just to get even with him."

While a woman could not count on her mother, or aunt, or sister-in-law to help along her illicit love affair, in some cases a grandmother, or sister, or friend might assist her in making assignations with the lover and would do their best to shield her from her husband. It was said that others were sympathetic especially if the lover were known as a brave man. In fact there were two sets of circumstances in which public opinion was lenient almost to the point of approval, although great discretion was necessary to avoid the husband's suspicion, since he still had the right of punishing his wife if he found her out. One kind of situation concerned the woman who sent a man out to accomplish some specific

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

and as long as you live see that they do not sell it or part with it."

So at Curly Head's death the Pipe fell to Iron Man II (Tall Jack), a relative of Curly Head, who since 1937 (1938) has looked after it. In 1948 it was still being kept in Curly Head's house.[8]

The normal term of keepership of the Feathered Pipe was four years. The very first keeper held the office 80 years, according to the origin story given by Garter Snake, and some later ones, according to tradition, up to 20 years, but the usual limit was supposed to be at most two or three terms, that is eight or twelve years.

There was always a Pipe woman or co-keeper, wife of the keeper. She handled the Pipe bundle and in general had about the same ritual and other duties toward it as had the co-keeper of the Flat Pipe toward the Flat Pipe bundle. The Feathered Pipe keeper had to have at least two wives, for during her menses the co-keeper could not handle the bundle and had to sleep and live outside the keeper's lodge and another wife of the keeper had to substitute for her in the handling and care of the bundle.

There was always, too, a Pipe child,—a girl, unless the keeper had no daughters, in which case a son could be selected by him as Pipe child. Thus the oldest son of Sitting High, who had no daughters, became Pipe child. The Pipe child was not necessarily appointed at once by the keeper on assuming the keepership. Garter Snake was not made Pipe child until she was about six years old. Iron Necklace who had been Feathered Pipe keeper some

[8] In the summer of 1951, Iron Man, assisted by The Boy, had a ceremonial opening of the Feathered Pipe bundle. Dr. Louis B. Hagener, Professor of Biology of Northern Montana College, accompanied by his wife, and Dr. Otto Nitz, Professor of Chemistry, now at Stout Institute of Technology, Menominie, Wisconsin, were among the spectators. The pictures in Plates 2 B-C, 3 A-D, were taken by Dr. Nitz at that time. Dr. Hagener has kindly supplied information regarding the 1951 ceremonial. He writes under date of Aug. 8, 1954, as to final disposal of the Feathered Pipe bundle: "Since the young people were so apathetic over the bundle, its significance, and the ceremony, Iron Man and his wife had resolved not to open it again. They were debating as to whether it should be given to a museum or whether the tribe would outfit Iron Man and his wife for a journey and permit them to dispose of it somewhere in the mountains." [R.F.]

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

powerful men to die. That particular man Drops In The Fire, however, always claimed to be bullet proof." 755

When, on one occasion, one of Coming Daylight's daughters was very ill, the wife of Buffalo Run finally cured the girl. "I called in Stiffarm," Coming Daylight said, "who demanded a large amount of things for payment, because he said the girl had this stomach diseasse [cancer?]. He wanted my husband, Little Man, to make him a lodge and he would doctor the girl. But I said: 'No. My daughter hasn't got that disease. I don't want you to make that lodge.' Then we got another medicine man, whose daughter had died at the Mission. Finally I said: 'I am going to take my daughter to someone who can cure her.'

"So I told my husband to load food and wood. I took my daughter down below Stiffarm's place, to where Buffalo Run (or Chase) used to live with his wife. There was the woman who was the medicine woman. When I got there, she said to me, just teasing: 'Where is this mean woman going?' I handed her the pipe and told her to smoke it, and she took it, which meant she would do what I was asking her to do. I said to her: 'I want you to get my daughter well.' And I gave her the grub to eat and some wood. She said to me, just teasing like: 'So you had to come to me, this mean woman!' Then she said: 'If you do what I tell you to do, I will get your daughter well. You are to leave her here with me and I will give her medicine every day and tend to her (that is, put medicine all over her, make her drink it, and draw the thing out).' So I and my husband left my daughter there and we went home alone. Every now and then I took grub and wood to the medicine woman. Sure enough, not long after that my daughter got well. Soon after that she married, and she is alive and well today." Good Singer, Coming Daylight's mother's sister, had an ancestral helper[14] and was also a practicing doctor. We recorded her doctoring song, as sung by The Boy, song number 28, and by Coming Daylight, song number 122. 757 755

A cure by Good Singer was described by Singer. "Once the man I was living with was very ill, almost dead. One of his wives—he had several besides myself,—called in this medicine woman, 755 [595] Good Singer.

[14] Cf. Flannery, 1944, pp. 55-56.